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The Office of Congressman Jim McDermott

Highlights: Actions and Legislative Achievements in the 112th Congress

Below please find **selected highlights** of Congressman Jim McDermott's recent actions and legislative achievements in the 112th Congress. These issues are just a few of the many that the Congressman has been working on in 2011/2012, and he urges you to visit his website at www.McDermott.house.gov or call his office at 206-553-7170 if you need assistance or are looking for further information.



Recent Laws Passed/Major Projects

Despite Republican control of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Jim McDermott has used his seniority in the House to pass important legislation. He's proud of the laws he has passed and the projects he has worked to fund.

- ***Regulating Psychotropic Medications among Foster Children (Public Law No: 112-34)***: Congressman McDermott authored a law that requires states to enforce stronger measures to prevent the overmedication of foster care youth.
- ***Testing Innovative Child Welfare Programs (Public Law No: 112-34)***: Congressman McDermott authored a law that allows states to develop and test new approaches aimed at improving the lives and living situations of at-risk children and families.
- ***Protecting U.S. Manufacturers and Workers from China's Unfair Trade Policies (Public Law No: 112-99)***: Congressman McDermott authored a law that allows the U.S. Commerce Department to impose penalties on Chinese products that illegally undercut U.S. companies and products.
- ***Creating a New Poverty Measure***: In 2011, the Census Bureau released the Supplemental Poverty Measure – the basis of a bill that Congressman McDermott wrote in 2008 – which more accurately measures poverty and shows how important federal safety net programs are in preventing Americans from falling into poverty.
- ***Conflict Minerals Trade Act (Public Law No: 111-203)***: Congressman McDermott authored a law which requires U.S. companies to disclose that the minerals they are using from the Democratic Republic of Congo are conflict-free. Many of these minerals can be found in cell-phones and other electronics, and the sale of these minerals finances war in the Congo. McDermott is working to ensure that the SEC issues the regulations.
- ***Reinforcing the Howard Hansen Dam***: Congressman McDermott worked with his colleagues to secure \$44 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to repair the Howard Hansen Dam.
- ***Replacing South Park Bridge***: Congressman McDermott worked to secure funding to build the new South Park Bridge after the old bridge closed due to safety concerns.

Infrastructure & Jobs Highlights

Congressman McDermott believes in direct government spending to create jobs and that infrastructure spending is especially critical to job creation.

- ***Congressman McDermott has led the fight to secure funding to replace Seattle's Seawall***: The Congressman pushed the Army Corps of Engineers to include seismic risks in the cost-benefit analysis of replacing the crumbling seawall. In November 2011, at Congressman McDermott's urging, the Army Corps agreed that seismic considerations should be included. This is a great step forward, and the Congressman continues to work to get the Seawall replacement project fully funded.



- ***American Jobs Act of 2011 (H.R. 12)***: The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill to spur job growth by creating a national infrastructure bank; modernizing over 35,000 schools; and investing in America's roads, rails, and airports.
- ***Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2011 (H.R. 3346)***: This legislation, which was included in a broader package that was signed into law, extended Federal unemployment insurance programs through 2012. During the past 50 years, Congress has never allowed federal emergency unemployment insurance benefits to lapse when the unemployment rate was higher than 7.2 percent. Congressman McDermott fought hard to ensure that the emergency unemployment insurance program was extended, which has prevented millions of Americans from falling into poverty.
- ***Pathways Back to Work Act of 2011 (H.R. 3425)***: The Congressman cosponsored this bill to create employment and training opportunities for jobless workers, including those who have exhausted their Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits or who have insufficient work experience or earnings to qualify for UI.

Health Care Highlights

Congressman McDermott, a medical doctor, has long pushed for universal access to affordable, high-quality health care, which is a right in a just, democratic society. He has also fought efforts to cut or to privatize Medicare.

- ***The American Health Security Act of 2011 (H.R. 1200)***: The Congressman wrote this bill to publicly finance a universal health care system. Ever since his election to Congress, the Congressman has authored legislation every session to establish a nationwide framework under which each state could provide publicly financed universal health coverage.
- ***Medicare Physician Payment Transparency and Assessment Act of 2011 (H.R. 1256)***: The U.S. health care system desperately needs more primary care doctors. However, specialty practices are far more lucrative than primary care and disproportionately attract the best talent from our medical schools. Congressman McDermott's bill would encourage more medical students to go into primary care by equalizing the unfair financial pay disparity that exists between specialists and primary care doctors.
- ***Small Business Employee Health Insurance Credit Expansion Act of 2012 (H.R. 4324)***: McDermott wrote this bill to expand the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit that was enacted in 2010 as part of the historic Affordable Care Act. The bill would make it easier and affordable for more small businesses to provide critical health benefits to their workers.
- ***Congressman McDermott has been a stalwart opponent of Republican efforts to repeal the 2010 health care reform law***: The Affordable Care Act (ACA) improves access to affordable health care coverage, provides consumer protections, and reduces the federal deficit. Congressman McDermott recognizes that the ACA is a huge step in the right direction in terms of improving health care in the U.S., and he consistently opposed efforts to dismantle the bill throughout 2011.
- ***Women's Health***: Congressman McDermott has been a champion for the right of women to access



reproductive and family planning services, and one of the most vocal critics of various anti-choice amendments in the Congress. He often speaks on the House floor against the House Republicans' onslaught on women's right to reproductive health care, especially poor women. He has signed a number of letters calling on Republicans to stop their attack on Planned Parenthood – letters to protect funding for the Title X program, which supports family planning programs for the low-income and the uninsured.

Labor Rights Highlights

Congressman McDermott strongly supports workers' rights and has defended them at every possible opportunity.

- ***Fair Playing Field Act of 2012:*** Congressman McDermott introduced this legislation to close a tax loophole in current law that allows businesses to misclassify workers as “independent contractors” instead of “full-time employees.” Misclassified employees are often denied access to critical benefits and protections like family and medical leave, overtime, minimum wage and unemployment insurance. The bill would also ensure that the government doesn't lose out on billions of dollars in unpaid taxes.
- ***Healthy Families Act of 2011 (H.R. 1897):*** Half of private-sector workers and three-fourths of low-wage workers do not receive paid sick days, and the Congressman believes this is unfair. The Healthy Families Act, which the Congressman cosponsored, would allow employees to earn one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of 56 hours (seven days) annually.
- ***Paycheck Fairness Act of 2011 (H.R. 1519):*** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2009, women who worked full time earned, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar men earned. Congressman McDermott is a cosponsor of this bill to update the Equal Pay Act of 1963, strengthening the Department of Labor's enforcement tools to close the wage gap.
- ***Opposed efforts to defund the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB; H.R. 1):*** The NLRB is an independent federal agency charged with investigating and remedying unfair labor practices. As part of the continuing Republican-led effort to attack workers' rights, an amendment was offered to defund the NLRB. Congressman McDermott staunchly defended the agency and helped defeat this effort.
- ***Opposed efforts to repeal the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage law (H.R. 1; H.R. 658; H.R. 2017; and, H.R. 2055):*** The Davis-Bacon law ensures that workers on public construction projects funded by taxpayer dollars are paid a wage comparable to the local standard or “prevailing” wage. Congressman McDermott voted against four separate efforts by House Republicans to repeal this law. Each effort failed.
- ***Opposed an amendment to strip some Federal employees of collective bargaining rights (H.R. 2017):*** After a nearly 10-year battle, Transportation Security Officers at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) finally won collective bargaining rights in February 2011. In June, Republicans offered an amendment that would prohibit collective bargaining for TSA employees. Congressman McDermott strongly opposed this amendment.



Environment/Energy Highlights

The recipient of an A+ grade from the Sierra Club on environmental issues, Congressman McDermott has consistently supported legislation to protect our environment and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

- **Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBs):** The Congressman is currently writing legislation that would remove the cap on CREBs allocations. It would also remove government entities from the list of groups that can benefit from CREBs. This would create incentives to produce clean and renewable energy for public power.
- **Salmon Solutions and Planning Act (H.R. 2111):** The Congressman wrote this bill which would commission studies to determine the best way to ensure salmon recovery along the lower Snake River.
- **No New Drilling Act of 2011 (H.R. 261):** The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill to prohibit the leasing of any area of the outer Continental Shelf for the exploration, development, or production of oil, gas, or any other mineral. The Outer Continental Shelf includes waters off the Pacific, Atlantic, Alaskan coasts and the entire Gulf of Mexico.
- **End Big Oil Tax Subsidies Act of 2011 (H.R. 601):** The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill to eliminate subsidies and tax breaks for big oil and save our government \$40 billion over the next five years.
- **Save our Climate Act of 2011 (H.R. 3242):** The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill to levy a carbon tax on fossil fuels in order to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, spur development of alternative energy, protect consumers from rising energy costs, mitigate climate change, and reduce our deficit.
- **Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions and Pratt and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 608):** The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill.
- **National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Act (H.R. 3465):** The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill.

Tax Reform Highlights

As a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee – the U.S. House of Representatives' tax-writing committee – Congressman McDermott strongly supports a more progressive tax code.

- **Tax Parity for Health Plan Beneficiaries Act of 2011 (H.R. 2088):** Congressman McDermott wrote this legislation to eliminate the disparate tax burden on same-sex and opposite-sex couples who receive domestic partner health benefits from their employers. On average, domestic partners pay \$2,000 more in federal taxes than their married co-workers.
- **Taxpayer Receipt Act of 2011 (H.R. 1583):** Congressman McDermott introduced this legislation to provide taxpayers with a comprehensive, itemized and easy-to-read list of how their tax dollars are spent each year.
- **Sensible Estate Tax Act of 2011 (H.R. 3465):** Congressman McDermott introduced this legislation to bring



estate tax rates back to the pre-2001 levels – levels that worked and helped drive growth for all Americans – with a maximum marginal rate of 55% and a \$1 million exemption.

- ***Tax Levy Relief Act of 2012 (H.R. 4368)***: Congressman McDermott introduced this legislation to allow the IRS to make sure that in pursuing businesses that owe back taxes, they do not unnecessarily cost jobs in the process. The bill would give the IRS the authority to release a tax levy if that levy would cause an undue economic hardship to that struggling business.
- ***State and Local Sales Tax Exemption (H.R. 476)***: The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bipartisan legislation to make the state and local sales tax deduction permanent, which is critical to states like Washington where there is no state income tax.
- ***Stop Tax Haven Abuse Act (H.R. 2669)***: The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill to curb abuses of the international tax laws that cost taxpayers nearly \$100 billion a year. The bill would authorize the U.S. Treasury Secretary to take special measures against foreign jurisdictions or financial institutions that impede U.S. tax enforcement, close offshore tax loopholes, and increase penalties on tax shelter promoters.

Housing Highlights

Congressman McDermott believes that the federal government needs to do more to help struggling homeowners, especially those who got caught up in the financial crisis that Wall Street banks created.

- ***Limiting Investor and Homeowner Loss in Foreclosure Act of 2011 (H.R. 2713)***: Congressman McDermott introduced this bill to clarify the authority of bankruptcy courts and allow them to continue operating voluntary loan modification programs so that struggling homeowners and their lenders can come together and find mutually beneficial resolutions to mortgage difficulties.
- ***Homeowner Tax Fairness Act of 2012 (H.R. 4290)***: McDermott wrote this bill to protect homeowners and servicemembers who were wrongly foreclosed on and entitled to relief under the historic national mortgage settlement from additional tax burdens.
- ***Preserving Homes and Communities Act of 2011 (H.R. 1477)***: The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill to expand and improve loan modifications programs by requiring lenders and servicers to evaluate homeowners for sustainable modifications prior to initiating foreclosure. It would also eliminate the “dual tracking” scenario in which borrowers are evaluated for a loan modification while foreclosure proceedings are advanced.
- ***Home Foreclosure Reduction Act of 2011 (H.R. 1587)***: The Congressman is a cosponsor of this bill to allow bankruptcy judges to adjust the amount of an underwater mortgage to the fair market value of the home. The change would encourage homeowners to make their mortgage payments and help stop the endless cycle of foreclosures.
- ***Financial Crisis Criminal Investigation Act of 2011 (H.R. 1350)***: Millions of Americans were victim to the



financial crimes that brought about the collapse of Wall Street. The Congressman believes that Wall Street should be held accountable and has cosponsored this bill to provide the FBI with 1,000 additional forensic experts to investigate corporate, securities and mortgage fraud, and associated violations of law relating to the U.S. financial markets.

Social Safety Net Highlights

Congressman McDermott has consistently fought to strengthen federal programs that help low-income Americans.

- ***Social Security Insurance (SSI) Extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugees Act of 2011 (H.R. 3083):*** Congressman McDermott wrote this bill to ensure that thousands of elderly and disabled refugees did not lose vital public assistance. Disabled and elderly applicants may need more time to complete the citizenship process than the current eligibility window allows.
- ***To amend the Internal Revenue Code to qualify formerly homeless youth who are students for purposes of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC; H.R. 3076):*** The Congressman wrote this legislation to fix an issue in the tax code that prohibits certain full time students from living in LIHTC housing. The bill is supported by national and local housing and homeless advocacy groups.
- ***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Supplemental Grants Extensions Act (H.R. 2277):*** TANF is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. TANF funds are spent on cash assistance and various non-cash services including work activities, child care, transportation and work supports, and a wide range of other benefits and services. Congressman McDermott is the cosponsor of this bill to extend the Supplemental Grants program because it provided additional assistance to states with higher than average low-income populations.

Other Selected Highlights

- ***Citizens United:*** The Supreme Court's decision in the *Citizens United* case opened the flood gates to unlimited spending by corporations in U.S. political campaigns. Congressman McDermott is the cosponsor of ***H.J. Res. 78, 86 & 90*** – bills to overturn the ruling in the *Citizens United* case. McDermott believes that all federal elections should be federally financed.
- ***Congressman McDermott strongly supported the end of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy:*** September 20, 2011 marked the official end of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, the military's ban on gays serving openly in the U.S. armed forces.
- ***Employment Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 1397):*** The Congressman is a cosponsor of this legislation to ban workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.



- **Education:** Congressman McDermott has been an outspoken advocate for education and adamantly opposes any reductions in federal funding. He believes that every child deserves a first-rate education, from pre-school to college, and has worked on reducing class sizes while ensuring that teachers receive proper financial and classroom support. The Congressman has long worked toward increasing the cost of financial aid and recognizes that funding education is the best long term investment our nation can make.
- **Reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank:** The Congressman has consistently advocated that the Export-Import Bank be reauthorized and given broader lending authority. The Bank directly supports American companies that want to export goods, like Boeing, by providing competitive financing, and it does so at no cost to the taxpayer. The Bank's loans have been key to supporting American jobs – in 2010 alone, the Bank supported 227,000 U.S. jobs at more than 3,300 U.S. companies.
- **Increasing the Primary-Care Physician Workforce:** The Congressman realizes that more primary-care doctors are needed in order to reduce health care costs and properly meet the needs of the 30 million people who will be newly ensured when the 2010 health care reform law goes into full effect in 2014. He has advocated for a ROTC-like program to be created whereby the cost of going to medical school would be paid for in full for students who specialize in and practice primary-care medicine after completing school.
- **Launching the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth:** The Congressman worked with his colleagues to create the first-ever Congressional Caucus focused on foster children in 2012. The bipartisan Caucus, of which Congressman McDermott is a co-chair, is committed to better understanding the challenges facing all foster youth and develop policy recommendations for improving child welfare outcomes.
- **Launching the Congressional HIV/AIDS Caucus:** The Congressman founded this Caucus in 1992 to increase awareness of and to better understand the HIV/AIDS epidemic that was spreading throughout the world. McDermott has served as its co-chair since it was originally founded, and in 2011, he successfully encouraged Republican colleagues to join the Caucus, making it bipartisan in nature for the first time.
- **Supporting the University of Washington:** The Congressman has fought hard to help the UW get federal funding for numerous programs, and as a result, the University is among the top recipients of federal grants each year. For example, since 2000, the University has consistently received funding from the U.S. Department of Education to support projects like TRIO Training, Talent Search, Upward Bound, Student Support Services, graduate McNair and Educational Opportunity Center programs.
- **Supporting Arts and Humanities:** The Congressman is a strong supporter of the arts. He has consistently supported fully funding the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. McDermott has also helped secure federal funding from the NEA and NEH for local museums and projects – recently the Museum of History & Industry in Seattle received a \$425,000 grant.

These are just a few of the issues that Congressman McDermott has been working on. For more information please visit www.McDermott.house.gov.